

# METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DETECTING PLANARIZATION PRIOR TO CLEARANCE

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0043] A method for planarizing a semiconductor substrate is provided. The method initiates with tracking a signal corresponding to a thickness of a conductive film disposed on the semiconductor substrate. Then, a second derivative is calculated from data representing the tracked signal. Next, the onset of planarization is identified based upon a change in the second derivative. A CMP system configured to identify a transition between stages of the CMP operation is also provided.